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DEFICIT!

Sen. Sikkema says governor needs to explain how she's going to pay for \$400 million in salary increases without raising taxes

LANSING – Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema today said he wants to know how the governor will pay for \$400 million in salary increases for state employees without raising taxes or hurting education and local government services.

“State employees may deserve a raise, but taxpayers deserve to know how the governor will pay for them,” said Sikkema, R-Wyoming. “This is exactly how deficits occur, when government floats a check and assumes the taxpayers will cover it.”

Reports indicate the governor has agreed to a 10-percent salary increase for state employees during the next three fiscal years. It is estimated that this will increase state spending by nearly \$400 million.

Sikkema also said that he wants to know if the governor will be slashing department spending to cover the raises or if she expects public schools, universities and local governments to cover these costs.

Sikkema noted the state hasn't even held the revenue-estimating conference for the next fiscal year, let alone three years into the future.

“The governor's new spending commitments represent a huge step backward from the progress we've made during the past two years,” Sikkema said. “We are not raising taxes to pay for this. The taxpayers of Michigan send Lansing enough money and we all have to live within our means.”

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